INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Jean Ingalsbee DATE 10/5/81
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SAIGON 67-1 SC

EXDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF SAIGON 29258

1. I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A NUMBER OF PRELIMINARY COMMENTS REGARDING THE SITUATION WHICH LED TO THE DECISION TO HAVE A COMBINED THIEU-KY TICKET AND WITH RESPECT TO SOME OF THE POINTS WE SHOULD BE CONSIDERING FOR THE FUTURE.

2. ALTHOUGH THE FINAL STEP WAS TAKEN BY KY TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE GROWING DIVISION WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES, A NUMBER OF ELEMENTS CONTRIBUTED TO IT. ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT WAS CERTAINLY THE COMMITMENT MADE BY BOTH OF THEM TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON AND CONTINUING REMINDERS OF THIS TO BOTH THIEU AND KY BY GENERAL WESTMORELAND AND ME. OTHER FACTORS CLEARLY

PAGE 2 RUMJIR 80 S-E C R E T
RELATED TO DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURES AND THE INTER-PLAY OF VARIOUS ELEMENTS WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES. EXACTLY HOW THESE FACTORS PLAYED THEIR PARTS IS NOT YET CLEAR BUT IT IS APPARENT THAT THERE WAS AN OVERWHELMING FEELING WITHIN THE MILITARY THAT UNITY HAD TO BE ACHIEVED. IF THIS WAS TO BE DONE, THE FINAL GESTURE INEVITABLY HAD TO COME FROM KY IN THE FACE OF THIEU'S ATTITUDE AND SINCE THE FORCES SUPPORTING KY WERE APPARENTLY UNABLE TO BRING ABOUT A MORE ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION. KY PRESUMABLY SAW THE OVERRIDING SENTIMENT FOR UNITY AND THUS THE NEED FOR SACRIFICE BY HIMSELF. THE EFFECT, AT LEAST INITIALLY, WITHIN THE MILITARY IS ONE OF RELIEF AND HAPPINESS THAT THIS CHAPTER AT LEAST IS CLOSED.

3. LOOKING BACK AT THE WAY THIS MATTER DEVELOPED I AM MORE

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THAN EVER PERSUADED THAT OUR APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM WAS THE RIGHT ONE, I.E., TO EXERT CONTINUING BUT CAREFUL PRESSURE ON THE PRINCIPALS, BUT TO BRING THEM IN THE END TO WORK OUT THEIR OWN SOLUTION. AS I SAID IN AN EARLIER MESSAGE, IF WE CAN DO THIS IT WILL BE GOOD FOR THEM AND GOOD FOR US. I THINK THAT THIS CONCLUSION HAS BEEN PROVEN OUT AND THAT WE SHOULD MAINTAIN

THIS GENERAL APPROACH IN THE FUTURE. I AM PERSUADED THAT THE PROBLEMS WHICH WILL INEVITABLY ARISE IN FUTURE CAN BE HANDLED IN THE SAME WAY IF THERE IS MUTUAL CONFIDENCE IN THE OBJECTIVES WE SEEK AND PATIENCE REGARDING THE WAY WE TRY TO ACHIEVE THEM ON THE SPOT.

4. AS I HAVE INDICATED, OUR INITIAL SOUNDINGS AMONG THE MILITARY ON THE MORNING-AFTER INDICATE FEELINGS OF GRATIFICATION AND CONVICTION THAT THE UNITY THAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED MUST BE CONTINUED IN THE DIFFICULT PERIOD AHEAD. THE MARRYING OF THE ELEMENTS SUPPORTING THIEU AND KY WILL BE A DIFFICULT ONE BUT I BELIEVE IT IS BY NO MEANS INSUFFERABLE. THERE WILL BE DISCONTENTED ELEMENTS, OF COURSE, AND CERTAIN RUMBLINGS AND UNHAPPINESS UNDER THE SURFACE. OUR OBJECTIVE WITH THIEU AND KY AND THEIR SUPPORTERS WILL BE TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO WORK SINCERELY AND HONESTLY TOGETHER FOR FREE AND IMPARTIAL ELECTIONS. WHAT THEY DO TO OVERCOME THE INEVITABLY INCREASED CIVILIAN FEARS OF PRESSURE AND INTIMIDATION WILL BE ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT IN THIS NEW SITUATION. WE WILL WANT TO WATCH THEIR MOVES CLOSELY IN THIS CONNECTION AND TO CONTINUE QUIETLY TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO PURSUE A COURSE THAT

WILL MEET OUR COMMON GOALS.

5. THE PROBLEM OF GIVING THE NEW TICKET A SOLID CIVILIAN ELEMENT AS A BASIS FOR BROAD CIVILIAN-MILITARY COOPERATION AFTER THE ELECTIONS WILL NOW BE GREATER. THE APPOINTMENT OF AN ABLE AND POPULAR CIVILIAN PRIME MINISTER, OR AN ARRANGMENT FOR EVENTUAL COOPERATION WITH ONE OF THE LEADING CIVILIAN TICKETS IN FORMING A GOVERNMENT, WILL BE ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT. A PUBLICLY PROFESSED WILLINGNESS TO COLLABORATE WITH THE CIVILIAN ELEMENTS AND CANDIDATES IN BOTH THE EXECUTIVE AND THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES WOULD BE A

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CONSTRUCTIVE STEP. WE WILL SEEK TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO PURSUE THIS GENERAL LINE AND WE WILL TRY TO CREATE A RECEPTIVE ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF THE CIVILIAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES AND THE MEMBERS OF THE TICKETS FOR THE SENATE.

6. OUR INITIAL IMPRESSION OF REACTIONS FROM THE CAMPS OF THE CIVILIAN CANDIDATES IS ONE OF SURPRISE AND CONFUSION AND CERTAIN PREMONITIONS AS TO THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH FACE THEM. THEY HAD COME TO EXPECT A DIVIDED MILITARY CAMP AND NOW ARE FACED WITH THE PROBABILITY OF A UNIFIED MILITARY WITH ALL THE ADVANTAGES OF INCUMBENCY. ONCE THE

INITIAL CONFUSION IS OVER ON THE CIVILIAN SIDE, WE WOULD IMAGINE THAT THERE WILL BE A GREATER TENDENCY FOR THE PRINCIPAL CANDIDATES TO TRY TO DEVELOP A MORE EFFECTIVE COMBINATION TO COMPETE WITH THE THIEU-KY TICKET. WE KNOW THERE HAVE ALREADY BEEN SOUNDINGS BETWEEN THE SUU-DAN AND THE HUONG-TRUYEN SLATES AND HA THUC KY, POSSIBLY WITH THE LATTER AS PRIME MINISTER. THERE MAY ALSO BE INCREASING FLIRTATION BETWEEN THE LEADING CIVILIAN CONTENDERS AND THE MILITARY TICKET, LOOKING TO FUTURE COLLABORATION. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE MAY ALSO BE A GREATER TENDENCY TO LOOK FOR AN EXCUSE TO CALL FOUL IN CONNECTION WITH THE CONDUCT OF THE ELECTIONS, AS A BASIS FOR ULTIMATE WITHDRAWAL.

7. WE WILL BE FOLLOWING ALL OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE. I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT FOR US TO GIVE THIS SITUATION TIME TO SETTLE DOWN AND NOT TO PRESS IN PREMATURELY ON SPECIFIC PROPOSITIONS. I BELIEVE WE HAVE A COMMON UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN US AS TO OUR GENERAL OBJECTIVES IN THE PERIOD AHEAD AND WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO ACHIEVE THEM AND TO KEEP YOU INFORMED REGARDING DEVELOPMENTS. BUNKER

NOTE: ADVANCE COPY TO S/S-O 6:45 AM, JUL 1.
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